

Message Text

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INR/RNA:GHARRIS

PM:RSMITH (SUBS)

EUR/WE:JSMITH

S/S- RGAMBLE

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY TUNIS PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY

INFO AMEMBASSY CAIRO

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EXDIS

E.O. 11652:GDS

TAGS:PFOR, PINR, TU, LY, US

SUBJECT: TUNISIAN APPREHENSIONS REGARDING LIBYA

REF: A - PARIS 21701; B - TUNIS 5177; C - CHMAAG/PARIS
261347Z

1. ALTHOUGH INFORMATION AVAILABLE TO DEPARTMENT FROM
VARIOUS INTELLIGENCE SOURCES DOES NOT APPEAR TO SUPPORT GOT
CONTENTION THAT MILITARY, SUBVERSIVE OR TERRORIST ATTACK ON
TUNISIA BY LIBYA IS IMMINENT, WE ARE TAKING MEASURES TO
REASSURE TUNISIA'S LEADERS SINCE THEY APPARENTLY PERCEIVE
LIBYAN THREAT.

2. AS DIRECT RESULT GOT APPROACH REF A WE HAVE EXTENDED
VISIT BY TWO US WARSHIPS CURRENTLY IN TUNIS AND ARE LOOKING
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INTO POSSIBILITY OF INCREASING FREQUENCY FUTURE SHIP VISITS

UNTIL CRISIS SUBSIDES.

3. REPORT HAS BEEN COMPILED FROM US INTELLIGENCE SOURCES ASSESSING LIBYAN CAPABILITIES FOR AND INTENTIONS OF MOUNTING OVERT AND/OR COVERT ACTIONS AGAINST TUNISIA AND THIS WILL BE TRANSMITTED TO GOT OFFICIALS WITHIN NEXT 24 HOURS. REPORT CONCLUDES THAT WE DO NOT FORESEE MILITARY BUILDUP IN DIRECTION TUNISIA AS LONG AS LIBYANS PREOCCUPIED WITH EGYPT AND SUDAN TO EAST. HOWEVER, GIVEN LARG HISTORY OF INVOLVEMENT IN ATTEMPTED SUBVERSION OF AFRICAN AND NEAR EASTERN REGIMES AND IN RECRUITMENT, HARBORING, ARMING AND FINANCING TERRORISTS, WE CANNOT RULE OUT POSSIBILITY OF QADHAFI SUPPORT FOR SUBVERSIVE MOVEMENT FROM WITHIN TUNISIA RATHER THAN MILITARY ATTACK.

4. WE ARE EXPLORING OTHER FORMS OF COOPERATION WITH GOT TO IMPROVE ITS CAPABILITY TO GATHER INFORMATION ABOUT LIBYAN ACTIVITIES.

5. A TUNISIAN MILITARY MISSION IS EXPECTED IN THE US IN MID-AUGUST AND WE SHALL DISCUSS WITH THEM THE PROGRAM OF ACQUISITION BY GOT OF MILITARY EQUIPMENT UNDER FMS, AND POSSIBILITIES FOR EXPEDITING DELIVERIES.

6. REF C CONCERNED TUNISIAN DESIRE OBTAIN ON LOAN FRENCH MINESWEEPER ORIGINALLY ACQUIRED BY GOF UNDER MAP. WHILE WE ARE SYMPATHETIC TO TUNISIAN REQUEST, COMPLICATED PROCEDURES UNDER NEW SECURITY ASSISTANCE LEGISLATION INVOLVE CONGRESSIONAL NOTIFICATION AND PRECLUDE EARLY TRANSFER. INSTRUCTIONS IN RESPONSE REF C ARE BEING PREPARED AND WILL BE SENT EMBASSY, PARIS, SEPTTEL.

7. ON JULY 27, ALI HEDDA, TUNISIAN AMBASSADOR IN WASHINGTON HAD MEETING WITH UNDER SECRETARY HABIB DURING WHICH FORMER REITERATED GOT CONCERNS AND REQUESTS FOR TANGIBLE EVIDENCE OF US SUPPORT. HABIB INFORMED HEDDA OF STATUS OF OUR ACTIONS PURSUANT TO JULY 22 GOT APPROACH ALONG LINE PARAS 1-6 ABOVE.

8. FOR PARIS: YOU MAY SHARE FOREGOING WITH QUAI AT
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APPROPRIATE LEVEL, NOTING THAT WE WOULD BE PLEASED TO CONTINUE EXCHANGE WITH FRENCH IN EFFORTS TO PROVIDE REASSURANCE AND SUPPORT TO TUNISIA. WE SHOULD ALSO APPRECIATE HAVING UPDATED FRENCH ASSESSMENTS OF EVOLUTION TUNISIAN-LIBYAN SITUATION AND WILL BE PLEASED TO RECIPROCATE.

9. FOR TUNIS: AT YOUR DISCRETION IF YOU BELIEVE IT WOULD

BE USEFUL AND ENHANCE SUPPORTIVE POSTURE FOR TUNISIA, YOU
ARE AUTHORIZED TO SHARE SUBSTANCE PARAS 1 THROUGH 7 WITH
FRENCH EMBASSY IN TUNIS AND INVITE THEIR RECIPROCITY. KISSINGER

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